

27A

INNOVATION.

P O E M.

ADDRESSED TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EDMUND BURKE,

BY

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Oh, ENGLAND! model to thy inward greatness,
Like little body with a mighty heart;
What might'st thou do, that honour would thee do,
Were all thy children kind and natural!
But see, thy fault FRANCE hath in thee found out;
A NEST OF HOLLOW BOSOMS.

SHAKESPEARE—HENRY V.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. STOCKDALE, PICCADILLY.

1793.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

18048. 7.75



Hill fund

34-111
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~~THE present state of France, subjected to a despotism~~
~~at once so capricious and unqualified, that neither the life~~
~~nor the property of the most virtuous Citizen is secure for~~
~~a single day.~~

The profligate attempts, which, in spite of an example so
awful, are hourly made to reduce this country to a state of
equal calamity—by the adoption of those miserable theories
which proved the bane of the former —by the promulga-
tion of every doctrine, however absurd, which is calculated
to disseminate discontent among the lower classes in society
---by a systematic attack on the body of our laws, and con-
sequently on the private property of every individual, of
which those laws are the only security:

And, lastly, the dreadful ruin which must attend the success of such attempts, in a country where millions depend for subsistence on commerce, and consequently on public credit, concurring with that veneration which every man must feel towards our present Constitution; when he reflects that it has rendered this little kingdom the most free and the most flourishing state in existence: have suggested to the Author, during the leisure of a Vacation, the following Composition.

INNO-

INNOVATION.

A POEM.

ADDRESSED TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EDMUND BURKE.

OH thou! in whose emphatic Page we trace
The glowing beauties of each sister Grace,
As prompt to crown the Patriot's ardent vow,
They lift the veil from Wisdom's awful brow;
Oh, thou! whose toils, with equal scorn, defy
The smooth perversion, and the shameless lye;

B

The

The sorry ridicule which fools impart,
 And the cold sneer which speaks the canker'd heart,
 While blest by all their country's weal who prize,
 While blest by all the good, and all the wife ;
 If, in some moment of reluctant pause,
 Which toiling Virtue yields to Nature's laws,
 When rustic arts, and rustic converse charm,
 And the light labour of thy cultur'd farm,
 When social trifles smooth the brow of Care,
 The Muse shall claim their grateful task to share :
 Oh, meet her homage with no cold distrust,
 Severely grateful, as severely just !

Combining, penetrating, vast, profound !
 The wond'rous maze of Nature trac'd around ;
 Unmov'd we mark'd thy treasur'd mind attain
 " To something," truly, " of prophetic strain."

Lo!

Lo! Time has usher'd many an ill foretold,
 Which Wisdom wept to see her page unfold;
 But crimes which load the groaning earth with shame,
 Which instinct, reason, nature, man defame,
 As strange as foul, the Sybil glance defy,
 Which breaks from pausing Wisdom's lifted eye.

Oh, PARIS!—where, for many a thoughtless hour,
 I stoop'd to Pleasure's fascinating power—
 Even now thy scenes each captive sense invade!
 The mingled hum of Pleasure and of Trade;
 The lively bustle of the talking throng;
 The merry discord of eternal song;
 Good-humour perch'd on every smutty brow;
 The proffer'd box, and everlasting bow;
 The darling glare of economic state,
 Important rolling from some palace-gate;

All

All-ruling Gallantry! thy votive glance,
 Respectful pleading for the Saint's-day dance;
 And that well-reason'd bliss the scorn of Care,
 While Love, and Peace, and Social Joy, were there.

Oh, Peace! Oh, Social Joy! Oh, heaven-born Love!
 Were these your haunts where murderous demons rove?
 Where fiends their academic orgies hold,
 And novel Rights for thankless Man unfold?
 Distinctions neat and nice, which lie between
 The poison'd chalice and the stab unseen!

Ill-fated City! as thy streets I trace,
 So late the scene of ev'ry festive grace;
 Of every comfort of creative art;
 Of all which science, wealth, and peace impart;
 Whene'er my thoughts from present danger stray,
 How droops the sick'ning bosom with dismay!

No

No social murmur soothes the wakeful ear,
 But all is silent, chill, benumbing fear;
 And Hatred's fowl, and Caution's look askance,
 And Famine's glare, and Terror's lightning glance;
 The ruin'd Trader makes one effort more,
 And sweeps the settling spider from his door,
 Urg'd by a parent's heart to weigh the dread
 Of threat'ning plunder with the sigh for bread.
 Rash man! regain thy sheltering roof; for, hark!
 Those frantic yells some dismal triumph mark.
 Say, what are those which, high above the throng,
 Nod unregarded as they move along?
 Oh, coward groan!—the livid grin of Death,
 Fix'd by the struggle of departing breath;
 The fightless orbs on vacancy which glare;
 The lip contracted, and the clotted hair,
 From these cold fiends, nor look nor comment gain,
 Wrapt in yon female's philosophic strain;

Bak'd and impasted in her fellow's gore,
 The more than tygress growls her victims o'er.
 Trail'd at her heels amid the yielding crowd,
 What senseless object claims a shout so loud?
 Lo! round it bands of infant Furies press,
 And shrieks and laughs their frantic joy confess;
 Dark, filthy, shapeless, to the straining eye,
 Why heaves the boding heart so sick a sigh?—
 A headless trunk! insulted! naked! torn!
 A female!—Were these fiends of females born!
 Did woman's loins enfold the savage brood!
 Did woman's mangled bosom yield them food!

Triumph, unmatch'd of Democratic rule,
 Whose active genius stamps old Nero fool,
 Where despots, sick'ning to be still obey'd,
 Invoke cold murder to their wanton aid;

Where,

Where, ill-repress'd in nature's painful strife,
 The tear of Pity bares the Butcher's knife ;
 Where, o'er her shambles Torture pants for breath,
 And where to speak, to look, to think, is death ;
 Well doth thy bleeding country hail, in thee,
 The FOURTH auspicious YEAR of LIBERTY !

But say, fall'n City! where unhallow'd rage
 Strikes at the hoary scalp of helpless Age;
 Where infants, smiling on the murderer's knife,
 Pay the presumptuous smile with dawning life;
 Ye grim Tribunals, stain'd with civic blood !
 Thou, troubled Seine ! from whose polluted flood
 The hunted Citizen his death demands,
 The last sad refuge from the Torturer's hands ;
 Say, whence inur'd such complicated ill ?

Some puff'd Projector but display'd his skill.

If

If slaughter wade through guiltless blood around,
 'Tis but to prove some abstract axiom found;
 Some school-boy's cold, stale, crude, degrading theme,
 The scorn of Wisdom, and the Pedant's dream;
 Some rule for man, hung up in System's school,
 Till Heav'n shall frame a man to fit the rule;
 Some brain-sick meteor, some fantastic prize,
 Which nought but Nature to the wish denies;
 Whose sapient votaries such success shall cheer,
 As crowns, EQUALITY! thy dawning year;
 A crouching Senate, flogg'd to free debate,
 A prostrate People, and a Mob in state!

Oh, scepter'd Queen of Ocean's swelling tide,
 Our passion's idol and our reason's pride!
 Where, yet, 'tis safe such phrenzies to decry,
 Where, yet, no murder waits on Pity's sigh,

Where,

Where, yet, 'tis safe to think, and safe will be,
 Till rancorous Demagogues shall set us free :
 If one dull Briton views the subject earth,
 Nor feels his glorious privilege of birth ;
 Thy trade, thy wealth, the thunder of thy line,
 Thy people wise, free, frugal, brave, benign ;
 If he has mark'd the dole, at Pity's call,
 From the prompt hand of patient Labour fall ;
 By no fond zeal, no partial pride imprest,
 Peace to the tranquil slumbers of his breast !
 Oh ! let him speed, well gifted, to renew
 The failing musters of the miscreant few,
 Who, while their strains with Patriot ardour glow,
 Creep to inflict the parricidal blow ;
 For Freedom, well they know, with scorn defies,
 The shameless front of open enterprize,
 Till forc'd, when Faction's home-bred vultures tower,
 To fly for safety to the wing of Power.

D

Ye

Ye French Empirics, who delight "by stealth"
To cure plethoric states of too much health;
Yet "blushing," modest rogues, "to find it fame,"
Yield up your stage to Quacks of meaner name,
Ah! now your medicinal aid impart,
When Pride dilates the Briton's swelling heart!
We see, while wondering Europe bends with awe,
Our little birth-place give the nations law:
See to her sway reluctant rivals bend;
See on her credit rival wealth depend;
In arts triumphant, and in arms confest!
We see our country's glory, and are blest.

And ye, ye meaner Quacks, in cap and bell,
Who feel the misery of being well;
Proceed the mandates of your God to foil,
And bid perfection fit on human toil;

Folly

Folly to metaphysic modes condense,
And raise a rampart against common sense!
A foe, who laughing at your vain parade,
Our home-bred minds still ventures to invade—
Plain plodding fellows, and content to be,
For want of something better, great, and free!

Behold yon Hind, who, through the fultry day,
Repairs with finewy toil the flinty way:
Go, to his rough, unpolish'd ear dilate
Your flimsy projects for the car of State;
Tell him—The piece is with no system fraught,
And though it doth not fail, BY RULE IT OUGHT;
Tell him of tyranny unyok'd with thrall;
Of persecution tolerant in all;
And sects, whose pride so wrestles with their grace,
Pray'r is no pray'r, unless they pray in place.

“ Sir,

" Sir," will he say, " may pleasure wait your dreams,
" But why to me unveil these tinsel schemes ?
" Should this voracious town, in beef and beer,
" Devour twelve oily Senators a year ;
" Say, shall the Paviour's lungs no longer croak,
" In fullen cadence, to his thundering stroke ?
" Shall labour cease, shall Art's industrious band
" Forego the Patron's ostentatious hand ?
" Do these, thy wond'rous speculations, tend
" From want, and all its evils, to defend ?
" Poor as I am, thank Heav'n, in Britain born,
" I laugh Oppression's feeble frown to scorn ;
" Poor as I am, my poverty would sure
" Exact from tumults but a doubtful cure :
" When Famine, daughter of the civil broil,
" Shall mock the meanest hope of honest toil,
" What shall it boot that I am prov'd to be,
" By well-strung theorems, more free than free ?

" True ;

" True; Carnage, Rapine, Want besiege my gate;

" But, then—I'm represented in the State!

" Ah, Sir! regard, as Heav'n your dreams shall bless,

" Our comforts more, your metaphysics less."

See Poverty, defying all controul,
From age to age, in sad succession roll;
Fate crowns the Lazar's worn-out with—behold
The crazy cupboard cracks with buried gold;
His bloated heir in sensual riot feeds,
But the next pauper to his rags succeeds.

Oh, sage Reformer! let thy potent hand
Arrest imperious Nature's proud command;
Shall this all-philosophic age endure
So vile a Corporation as the Poor?
Yet, ere thy labouring mind the task essay,
Lift to the Muse, and mark her moral lay.

Legends of old, a fertile island trace,
 A beauteous Mole, on Ocean's azure face,
 Expell'd by common sense from every seat,
 Where abstract Folly fix'd her last retreat;
 There, on her craft, while moon-struck myriads gaz'd,
 Her darkness charm'd them, and her depthamaz'd:
 They weigh'd her mighty nothings with delight,
 And felt how wrong was wrong! how right was right!
 Her crapes with rapture o'er their eyes they drew,
 And seeing less, they thought it something new;
 They dealt in deep self-evidents, and found,
 That purblind people have the sight most found:
 Nor did it mar their maxim's mild repose,
 That, at each post, the blunderers bruise the nose.

Proud Commerce blest the Traders of this isle,
 Inventive art, and Fashion's fleeting smile;
 There,

There, strutting Wealth, with Science hand in hand,
 Smil'd on the praise she could not understand;
 There, while the rich in palling splendour vied,
 The happier poor rebuk'd their empty pride:
 Doom'd to deal out, forbidden to enjoy,
 Those lavish stores which frugal Nature cloy,
 The lofty dome which glitter'd from afar,
 The vest embroider'd, and the gilded car,
 Were but the splendid ducts of wealth, which, though
 It seem'd at Pride's capricious nod to flow,
 In Heaven-directed streams, refresh'd the soil,
 Decreed the sweet reward of patient toil:
 There, equal joys were destin'd to attend
 On him who toil'd to gain, or toil'd to spend;
 Expanding science humaniz'd the mind,
 And man was free, wise, social, and refin'd.

Con-

Convinc'd that Providence mistook her way,
 And proud to mark the errors of her sway;
 LET ALL BE EQUAL! Folly shouts aloud,
 BE EQUAL ALL! responds the madd'ning crowd.
 Behold the glutt'd pauper count his gain,
 Till rapture sickens in his giddy brain;
 But soon he finds the fancied gain was lost,
 And frowns indignant on the shining dross.

Poor as he was, what various arts combin'd,
 What toil of body, and what toil of mind;
 Ere the plain structure of his simple shed
 Diffus'd its comforts round the Peasant's head!
 The stubborn flint must tenfold heat sustain,
 Ere the flow fluid forms the cottage pane;
 The fleece which fenc'd his body from the storm,
 Unnumber'd arts had moulded to it's form;

What

What force allied his simplest food must yield?
 The flail, the mill, the furnace, and the field;
 The very tool which stitch'd his clouted shoe,
 The felon's crime from northern caverns drew,
 The forge refin'd, the dauntless seaman bore,
 Through rocks and quicksands, from the dangerous shore;
 From partial wealth he found these comforts fall,
 But equal wealth is poverty to all:
 Where shall he now, inur'd from early date,
 To all the blessings of a social state—
 Untaught, unaided, ignorant, and weak—
 Where shall he now the homeliest comfort seek?
 Should love of gain the wonted aid supply,
 That gain acquir'd, destroys Equality;
 Should social Pity—say, shall Pity roam,
 When dearer self asserts the claim at home;
 Where unremitting toil will just afford
 A Beggar's hovel and a Miser's board;

F

But

But waves, in harsh reproof, an iron hand
 To scare unthrifty Science from the land.
 Thus ceaseless labour yields a faint supply,
 And while the flurdy drudge, the feeble die;
 And far, with Science flies the godlike power,
 To chase Disease, or soothe the parting hour;
 Till—every want with every woe combin'd!—
 The cheated rabble cast a look behind;
 Grow wise at last, obey the will of Fate,
 And rise, exalted to a savage state.

Still doth thy brow on that frail system lower,
 Whose only fruits are freedom, safety, power?
 Attack! attack! three dashes of thy pen
 Shall conjure up the golden age again;
 Shall bid firm Independence smile on all,
 And man, self-govern'd, laugh at legal thrall;

At

At stern Oppression's frown, Want's cankering thorn,
 Wealth's cruel whim, and Pride's capricious scorn;
 Till firm and beauteous stands your dome of state,
 And asks but Angels to support its weight.
 Ah, trifler! cease at Heav'n's decrees to rail,
 And know, frail man's sublimest system frail;
 Say, can'st thou, Rage, Oppression, Pride, dethrone?
 Ah! why then leave us gravel, gout, and stone!
 Ah, know thyself, nor think thy toils subdued
 The stubborn substance with the transient hue;
 Let not thy pride fair Freedom's form disown,
 Because her glories beam around a throne;
 Let not thy zeal for foul Oppression grub,
 And call it freedom in a lawless club:
 But go, if reformation charms thine ear,
 And learn thy duty in an humbler sphere;
 Doth the pile nod?—if blest by common sense—
 The low foundation sees thy toil commence.

Hence

Hence to thy lands thy tenants pine to see
 A father's liberal sway reviv'd in thee :
 There bid Disease uprear his languid head ;
 There the plain board for frugal labour spread ;
 There bid religion on that anguish smile,
 Which human prospects would in vain beguile :
 Those, sage Reformer ! be thy earliest care,
 To check the seeds of foul corruption there ;
 There, at the root of civil evil, strike,
 And bid thy wandering brethren do the like ;
 But leave destruction's weightier task to those,
 By cold, dull system, steel'd to human woes ;
 Who smile their Gallic pupils pranks to see,
 The dancing fiends of new philosophy :
 To those who, baffled in each dark design,
 And, marking genius, courage, worth, combine,
 That sacred fabric to protect, which, more
 Than life itself, our grateful hearts adore :

On

On that proud theme of scarce-expiring praise,
Without a blush, the senseless out-cry raise!

Must then prosperity allure our fate?
And is it ever dangerous to be great?
When—as her banners deck the swelling tide---
We mark the worm which saps the vessel's side;
When we behold Destruction's torrent roll,
And trace the source so vile, obscure, and foul,
The freedom, wealth, and glory, of our State,
With mitigated pride our hearts dilate:
And, as the prospect strikes the boding mind,
We frame a wish for blessings less defin'd;
For some slight flaw, to yield ambition scope,
Some loop-hole left where rogues may peep and hope;
Left, quitting in despair their flimsy toils,
They fire the house, to riot in the spoils!

G

Ye

Ye deep philosophers, whose dreams engage
 The deep reformers of this thankless age;
 Eyes of that world, which long in darkness roll'd,
 Sees, all at once—like puppies nine days old!
 Who marks with Scorn and Triumph's mingled tears,
 The wretched blunders of five thousand years;
 Who, wrapt in retrogressive systems, burn
 Experience, morals, order, God to spurn;
 Till plunder'd man your gloomiest phrenzies suit
 A free, blind, sensual, solitary brute:—
 And ye, whose shallow sophistry, decreed
 To cull from crazy clubs the tasteless meed,
 In envious pride your country still decries,
 And finds its rancour with her glory rise:—
 And ye, who Heaven itself with kinder eye
 Would view——if Heav'n were less a monarchy;
 Whose rip'ning projects, brighter days await,
 “ Though bought with blood not dearly bought*!” when fate

* See Priestley's Appeal to the Public on the Birmingham Riots.

Shall give mankind the finished toils to see,
 Of turgid, blind, mishapen vanity :---
 And ye, whose minds, with rich discoveries blest,
 Find God and Morals all a standing jest ;
 Whom, though a ruin'd people groan around,
 Still wrapt in self, no foreign woes can wound,
 Who Desolation's march with smiles can trace,
 Sooth'd by the promis'd plunder of a place !

If Pride impel, or creditors devour,
 And we must bleed because ye lust for power ;
 If civil broils must sink our prosperous trade,
 And chilling poverty our roofs invade ;
 If Famine lord it o'er uncultur'd ground,
 And homebred slaughter dye the country round :
 Oh, Queen of Cities ! if, with social Peace,
 The splendid wonders of thy streets must cease ;
 And fear and gloom their busy hum invade---
 What, though the famish'd son of fallen trade

Shall

Shall o'er untrodden pavement muse and weep,
 To see the yellow moss unseemly creep,
 Till some swol'n ruffian take a whim to roam,
 And taunt the offending mourner shrewdly home,
 This we can bear—Collect a desperate crew,
 Such as had sham'd Great CATALINE to view:
 But hear our pray'r — The ruffian sword employ,
 Drive us---but spare your efforts to decoy;
 Spare to your victims those heart-rending throes,
 Which the poor cheated self-destroyer knows,
 The madd'ning thought, that, by your arts entic'd,
 Our folly drain'd the bowl which you had spic'd.

THE END.